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PAWNEE MYTHOLOGY.¹

THE mythology of the Pawnees is founded almost entirely on their religion. Nearly all the ancient stories told in the tribes convey some religious lesson, usually recommending trust in the Deity and submission to his will, and enjoining that prayers for help be made to him. Besides stories of this class, there are a few which are told merely for purposes of entertainment. But these form only an inconsiderable part of the oral literature of the tribe. I shall endeavor to explain (1) the religious system of the Pawnees, (2) their myths of the creation, and (3) their heroic myths.² Under these three heads I shall give a concise statement of the Pawnee faith as it is known to me, without discussing the question as to how far the beliefs of these people have been changed by ideas acquired from white missionaries and others.

The religious beliefs of a people who have no written records, whose confession of faith exists only in oral tradition, must of necessity be more or less vague and shifting. We can learn what these beliefs are only by questioning those whom we suppose to be best informed about them, and the statements of such men will not always agree. Among Indians, just as among white men, there are individual differences of belief. The Christian religion has its written records extending back nearly two thousand years; but as we look back on the past history of that religion we see that, during much of that time, it has been going through a process of evolution, so that at the present day it differs widely from what it was a few hundred years ago. Yet even to-day, if it were possible to select fifty priests, pastors, and ministers of this Christian religion, and to examine them separately as to their religious and theological beliefs, it is altogether probable that no two of the fifty would agree on all points, while the opinions of some would be diametrically opposed to those of others. If this is true of what we term the most highly civilized people of the world, we can imagine that the faith of savage races who have no knowledge of writing will be still more changing and uncertain. The most that can be done, then, is to gather from the old men such accounts as they can give of their various beliefs,

¹ This article was intended to form part of an Introduction to North American Mythology, under the editorship of Dr. Franz Boas, the preparation of which has of necessity been deferred.

² The statements contained in the following pages are based on information gathered during many years' association with the Pawnee, Skidi, and Arikara tribes. I have had no opportunity of studying the southern members of the family, the Caddos, Huecos, Kichis, Tawaconis, and the Wichitas. With the more northern tribes, however, my intercourse has been close.

and carefully to record these statements without adding to or taking from them. Something of comment may be permitted, but nothing of theorizing. Facts are needed before one can generalize. I shall endeavor to give without change the statements made to me, and to record the beliefs of the tribes as I know them.

RELIGION.

The Deity of the Pawnees is *Atius Tiráwa*.¹ He is an intangible spirit, omnipotent and beneficent. He pervades the universe, and is its supreme ruler. Upon his will depends everything that happens. He can bring good luck or bad; can give success or failure. Everything rests with him. As a natural consequence of this conception of the Deity, the Pawnees are a very religious people. Nothing is undertaken without a prayer to the Father for assistance. When the pipe is lighted the first few whiffs are blown to the Deity. When food is eaten, a small portion of it is placed on the ground as a sacrifice to him. He is propitiated by burnt-offerings. When they started off on the summer and winter hunts, a part of the first animal which was killed, either a deer or buffalo, was burned to him. The first buffalo killed by a young boy was offered to him. The common prayer among the Pawnees is, "Father, you are the Ruler." They always acknowledge his power and implore his help. He is called "Father, who is above;" "Father, who is in all places."

Tiráwa lives up above in the sky. They say "The heavens are the house of *Tiráwa*, and we live inside of it." The overarching hemisphere of the sky, which on all sides reaches down to earth at the horizon, in their minds is likened to the walls and roof of the dome-shaped dirt lodges which the Pawnees inhabit. A similar conception prevails among the Blackfeet.

Next in importance to *Atius* comes the Earth, which is greatly reverenced. The Pawnees came out of the earth and return to it again. The first whiffs of the pipe are offered to *Atius*, but after these smokes to him, the next are blown to the earth, and the prayer, "Father of the dead, you see us," is expressed. Not very much is said by the Pawnees about the reverence which they feel for the earth, but much is told about the power of the Mother Corn, "through which they worship," which cares for and protects them, which taught them much that they know, and which, symbolizing the earth, represents in material form something which they revere. A Ree priest said to me, "Just as the white people talk about Jesus Christ, so we feel about the corn." Various explanations are given of the term "Mother," which is applied to the corn, but none are altogether satisfactory. The reference may be to the fact that the

¹ *Atius* = father. *Tiráwa* = spirit.

corn has always supported and nourished them, as the child is nourished and supported by its mother's milk, or, with a deeper meaning, it may be to the productive power of the earth, which each year brings forth its increase.

The Sun and the Moon and the Stars are personified. They are regarded as people, and prayers are made to them. There is some reason for believing that the sun and the moon once occupied a more important position in the Pawnee religious system than they do to-day. There are some songs which refer to the Sun as the Father and the Moon as the Mother, as if the sun represented the male and the moon the female principle. *O-pi-ri-kus*, the Morning Star, is especially revered by the Skidi, and human sacrifices were made to it.

It is represented that each day or night the Sun, Moon, and Stars paint themselves up and start out on a journey, returning to their respective lodges after their course is accomplished. There are two or three versions of a story which tells of a young woman taken up from earth by a Star and married to him. This young woman lived up in heaven for a time, but was killed while attempting to escape to earth again. Her child — the son of the Star — reached the earth, and lived long in the tribe. He had great power, which he derived from his father. I am not quite convinced, however, that this story is original with the Pawnees. It may have been borrowed from some other tribe.

The Thunder is reverenced by the Pawnees, and a special ceremony of sacrifice and worship is performed at the time of the first thunder in spring, which tells them that the winter is at an end, and that the season for planting is at hand. Then, too, they believe that the thunder brings the rain, on which the crops of the people depend, and that it must therefore be propitiated.

The various wild animals are regarded as agents or servants of *Atius*, and are known as the *Nahúrac*, a word which means "animal." It does not refer particularly to these magical or mystical animals which are the Deity's servants, but is a general term applied to any fish, reptile, bird, or beast. The *Nahúrac* personify the various attributes of *Atius*. He uses them as his messengers, and they have great knowledge and power, which they derive from him. They hold a relation to the supreme power, very similar to that of the angels in the Old Testament. The animals who possess these peculiar powers are, of course, not real animals. They are — we may presume — spirits who assume these shapes when they appear to men. Sometimes, or in some of the stories, they are represented as changing from the animal shape to that of men, — as in the account of the origin of the Young Dog's Dance.¹

¹ *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. iv. p. 307.

Perhaps no one at the present day could specify the precise attributes of each of the different *Nahúrac*, but there are certain characteristics which are well known to pertain to some of them.

Of all the animals, none was so important to the Pawnees as the Buffalo. It fed and clothed them, and, with their corn, was all their support. This alone was enough to entitle it to a very high place in their esteem. It was a sacred animal of great power, and was a favorite secret helper, and although it did not receive a measure of reverence equal to that felt for the Mother Corn, it was yet the most sacred and highly respected of all the animals. The eidolon of the buffalo, its skull, occupied a prominent position in many of the Pawnee sacred ceremonies, and rested on the top of many a lodge, signifying that it was the special helper of the owner. Even to-day, although the buffalo has long been extinct, everywhere in the Ree village this same object may be seen, at once the relic of a noble animal which has disappeared from the land, and the symbol of a faith which is passing away with the passing of a people. The buffalo appears to have typified force or power, as well as the quality of dashing blindly onward. Besides this, there were some buffaloes which were invulnerable, which could not be killed by ordinary weapons. It was necessary to rub on the arrow used against them, or in later times on the bullet, a peculiar potent medicine before the missile would penetrate the skin. Such buffaloes were usually described as sexless, of enormous size, and without joints in their legs.

While the Bear was by no means so sacred as the buffalo, he was regarded as singular for wisdom and power. He symbolizes invulnerability. He knows how to cure himself. No matter how badly he may be wounded, if only a little breath is left in his body he can heal himself. It is said that sometimes he does this by plugging up with certain medicine-herbs the wounds which have been inflicted on him. He has also the power of breathing out from his nostrils different-colored dusts, — red, blue, and yellow, — or of spitting out different-colored earths. Certain medicine-bears which belonged to two of the bands could not be wounded by ball or arrow. Of one of these it was said, "The lead will flatten out, the spike (of the arrow) will roll up" when it strikes his body. The Beaver was also regarded as an animal of great wisdom and power, and a beaver was always one of the four chiefs who ruled the councils of the *Nahúrac*. Craft was typified in the Wolf; courage, fierceness, or success in war by the birds of prey, the Eagle standing at the head; the Deer stood for fleetness, etc.

The black eagle, the white-headed eagle, and the buzzard are messengers of *Tiráwa*; by them he sent his orders to the first High

Priest, and instructed him in the secrets of his priesthood and in the other secrets. The buzzard and the white-headed eagle represent the old men,—those who have little hair and those whose hair is white; it is from these ancient men that the secrets have been handed down from generation to generation.

The *Nahúrac* had an organization and methods of conveying information to favored individuals. They had meeting-places where they held councils which were presided over by chiefs. The meeting-places were in underground lodges or caves, and there were known to the Pawnees, when they lived in their old home in Nebraska, no less than five such places. These were at *Pa-hük*, under the high bluff opposite Fremont, Nebraska, at *Ah-ka-wit'-a-köł*, under a high white bluff at the mouth of the Cedar River, at *La-la-wa-koh'-ti-tö*, under an island in the Platte River opposite the Lone Tree (now Central City, Nebraska), under the Sacred Spring *Kitz-a-witz'-ük*, on the Solomon River in Kansas, and at *Pahü'r*, or Guide Rock, in Kansas.

Persons who were pitied by the *Nahúrac* were sometimes taken into the lodges, where their cases were discussed in council, and they were helped, and power and wisdom were given them by the animals.¹ After it had been determined that he should thus be helped, the various animals, one after another, would rise in their places and speak to the man, each one giving him the power which was peculiar to itself. In such a council, the Buffalo would often give the man the power of running over those opposed to him: "You shall run over your enemies, as I do over mine." The Bear would give him the power to heal himself if wounded and to cure others. The Eagle would give him his own courage and fierceness: "You shall kill your enemies, as I do mine." The Wolf would give him the power to creep right into the middle of the enemy's camp without being seen. The Owl would say to him, "You shall see in the night, as I do." The Deer, "You shall run as fast as I can." So it would go on around the circle, each animal giving him that power or that knowledge which it typified. The speeches made in such *Nahúrac* councils were similar in character to those which would be made in any council of men.

Usually much of the knowledge taught a person, who was being helped by the *Nahúrac*, was that of the doctors, and those who had received this help were able to perform all those wonderful feats in the doctor's dances for which the Pawnees were so justly renowned. Often, too, these persons were made invulnerable, so that the arrows or the bullets of the enemy would not penetrate their flesh.

The stay of the individuals who might be taken into the *Nahúrac*

¹ See *Pawnee Hero Stories*, p. 98, "A Story of Faith," and p. 161, "The Boy who was Sacrificed."

lodges did not as a rule last longer than four days, though often a man who had once been received here might come again. If the time mentioned was not long enough to enable him to acquire all the knowledge of the *Nahúrac*, it sometimes happened that after such a visit the various animals would meet the person singly out in the hills or on the prairie, and would there communicate to him additional knowledge, especially that touching on the efficacy of various roots and herbs used in healing.

It is to be noted that the *Nahúrac* did not content themselves with giving to the person whom they pitied help, and nothing more. They also gave him good advice, telling him to trust always in the Ruler, and to look to One above, who is the giver of all power. Often they explained that all their power came from *Atíus*, whose servants they were ; that they did not make themselves great, that they were mortal, and there would be an end to their days.¹

It is not always specified what shape was taken by the four chiefs who ruled the *Nahúrac* councils ; but in at least one story it is stated that these were a beaver, an otter, a sand-hill crane, and a garfish.² In another story a dog appears to have been the chief.³ These animal councils had a servant who acted as their messenger, and carried word from one *Nahúrac* lodge to another. This bird is described with some detail in more than one of the Pawnee stories,⁴ and was evidently a species of tern.

The animals were the usual medium of communication between *Atíus* and man. They most often appeared to persons in sleep, telling them what to do, giving them good advice, and generally ordering their lives for them. But there is one story in which an individual is said to have spoken face to face with the Father.

The four cardinal points were respected by the Pawnees, and their place was high, although they were not often spoken of except in prayers. Still, the formula in smoking was to blow first four smokes to *Atíus*, then four to the earth, and last of all to each of the cardinal points. The east represented the night, for it is from that direction that the darkness comes. So, in one of the stories, a speaker, in advising a young man as to how he should act, says of smoking : "And always blow four smokes to the east, to the night ; for in the night something may come to you which will tell you a thing which will happen," that is, come true.⁵ It would be hard to find a closer parallel to our saying, "the night brings council." It is worthy of note that this conception of the east is the absolute reversal of our notion that the east brings the light — the morning ; one of the most familiar figures in our literature.

¹ Pawnee Hero Stories, p. 126.

² Ibid. p. 108.

³ Journal of American Folk-Lore, vol. iv. p. 307.

⁴ Pawnee Hero Stories, pp. 105 and 164.

⁵ Ibid. p. 118.

Closely connected with their respect for the night, is their firm confidence in dreams, which to a great extent govern their lives. Their belief in a future life is in part founded on dreams which they have had of being themselves dead, and finding themselves in villages where they recognized among the inhabitants relations and acquaintances who had long been dead. The faith in another life after this one is ended is exemplified by two stories, which I have already published,¹ which tell of the coming to life of persons who have died, and is fortified by the experiences of certain living men who believe themselves once to have died and visited these villages of the dead. It has always happened that those who thus returned to life have found themselves unwelcome on reaching the camps of the dead. They have not been well received, nor invited to sit down in the lodges of their relations. So they have left the village, and in a little while have found themselves again alive, and among living men on the earth.

Prayers for direct help are, as a rule, made only to the Father, and not to the animals, nor to the Sun, Moon, and Stars. But the last are constantly implored to act as intercessors with *Atius* to help the people. A prayer frequently made to the animals by a person in distress was this: "If you have any power, intercede for me." It is constantly stated in the tales current among the Pawnees that in minor matters the animals may be depended on for help, but if anything very difficult is sought, the petitioner must look only to the Father. The animals seem in many ways to hold a position in the Pawnee religious system analogous to that of the saints in the Roman Catholic faith.

Something must be said about the sacred bundles which are to the Pawnees what the Ark of the Covenant was to the ancient Israelites. Concerning these I may quote what has been written:—

"In the lodge or house of every Pawnee of influence, hanging on the west side, and so opposite the door, is the sacred bundle, neatly wrapped in buckskin, and black with smoke and age. What these bundles contain we do not know. Sometimes, from the ends, protrude bits of scalps, and the tips of pipestems and slender sticks; but the whole contents of the bundle are known only to the priests and to its owner,—perhaps not always even to him. The sacred bundles are kept on the west side of the lodge, because, being thus farthest from the door, fewer people will pass by them than if they were hung in any other part of the lodge. Various superstitions attach to these bundles. In the lodges where certain of them are kept it is forbidden to put a knife in the fire; in others, a knife may not be thrown; in others, it is not permitted to enter the lodge with

¹ *Pawnee Hero Stories*, pp. 129 and 191.

the face painted ; or, again, a man cannot go in if he has feathers tied in his head.

"On certain sacred occasions the bundles are opened, and their contents form part of the ceremony of worship.

"No one knows whence the bundles came. Many of them are very old; too old, even, to have a history. Their origin is lost in the haze of the long ago. They say : 'The sacred bundles were given us long ago. No one knows when they came to us.' Secret Pipe Chief, one of the very oldest men in the tribe, and its High Priest, said to me :—

"All the sacred bundles are from the far-off country in the southwest, from which we came long ago. They were handed down to the people before they started on their journey. Then they had never seen anything like iron, but they had discovered how to make the flint knives and arrow-points. There was nothing that came to us through the whites. It all came to us through the power of *Ti-rá-wa*. Through his power we were taught how to make bows and stone knives and arrow-heads.

"It was through the Ruler of the universe that the sacred bundles were given to us. We look to them, because through them and the buffalo and the corn, we worship *Ti-rá-wa*. We all, even the chiefs, respect the sacred bundles. When a man goes on the war-path, and has led many scouts and brought the scalps, he has done it through the sacred bundles."¹

Mr. Dunbar, in his sketch of the Pawnees, says : "The symbol of supernatural, I might almost say of divine presence, was the so-called medicine-bundle. To the Indians it was a sort of Shekinah. Each band had one. They were kept in charge by the doctors, and were carried with the band in all general expeditions, and cherished with the greatest reverence. They were opened only on occasions of special interest, and the opening and displaying of their contents was accompanied with great ceremony. Only those who had been expressly invited were allowed to attend. Forty years ago, through the persistent efforts of the second chief of the *Cau-i* band, Mr. Dunbar [the author's father] was allowed to be present on four of these occasions. Of later years this rigid exclusiveness has been entirely relaxed. The contents of the *Cau-i* medicine-bundle were a buffalo robe, fancifully dressed, skins of several fur-bearing animals, as the beaver, mink, and otter, the skull of a wildcat, stuffed skins of the sparrow-hawk (*Falco sparverius*), and the swallow-tailed fly-catcher (*Milvulus forficatus*), several bundles of scalps and broken arrows taken from enemies, a small bundle of Pawnee arrows, some ears of corn, and a few wads of buffalo hair, such as may be found

¹ *Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk Tales*, pp. 351-353.

in wallows where the animals roll when moulting. The presence of the robe in the collection was natural,—the buffalo was to them the staff of life. The furs, skull, and wads of hair were of reconcile meaning, and probably the Pawnees themselves had lost their original significance. The hawk was a symbol of bravery, and the swallow-tail was a sacred bird, possibly because of its remarkable appearance and rarity in their territory. The scalps and arrows were tokens of their own warlike prowess, and the corn of their agricultural interests.

"In each lodge was a bundle of sacred things, holding the same place in the estimation of the Pawnee as did the Penates with the ancient Roman. This bundle was suspended from the framework of the roof of the lodge, directly opposite the entrance. Beneath it was the seat of honor. Certain acts of recognition and devotion were regularly paid to it. Extreme care was taken that no act or work should afford cause of offence to it. No stranger could touch it; a knife could not be stuck in the floor of the lodge in its presence, and various other superstitious tenets were held concerning it. I have seen but two of these bundles opened. The principal object in one of them was a skull, reputed to be that of a famous enemy killed by an ancestor of the family long ago. It was worn quite smooth by handling and attrition, and was evidently of considerable antiquity. In the other the most noticeable object was a curiously marked flinty nodule about as large as a goose egg."¹

CREATION.

Tiríwa is the creator. He made the mountains, the prairies, and the rivers.

The men of the present era were not the original inhabitants of the earth. They were preceded by another race—people of great size and strength. These were so swift of foot, and so powerful, that they could easily run down and kill the buffalo. A great bull was readily carried into camp on the back by these giants, and when a calf or a yearling was killed, the man thrust its head under his belt and carried it dangling against his leg, as the men of to-day carry a rabbit. Often when these people overtook a buffalo, they would strike it with their hands, or kick it with the foot, to knock it down, and to-day, the Arikaras say, you can see the marks of these blows—the prints of the hands and the feet—on the flesh of the buffalo beneath the skin, where these people kicked and scratched the animals.

The race of giants had no respect for the Ruler. On the contrary, they derided and insulted him in every way possible. When the sun rose, or when it thundered and rained, they would defy him.

¹ J. B. Dunbar in *Magazine of American History* (1881).

They had great confidence in their own powers, and believed that they were able to cope with the Creator. As they increased in numbers they grew more defiant, and at length became so bad that *Tiráwa* determined to destroy them. This he attempted to do at first by shooting the lightning at them ; but the bolts glanced aside from their bodies without injuring them. When he found that they could not be killed by that means, he sent a great rain, which destroyed them by drowning. Mr. Dunbar states that this was a deluge, which submerged the high hills and the mountains, and the tradition of the Arikaras is the same. This does not agree with the story that I have heard from the Pawnees. They tell me that the ground became water-soaked and soft, and that these large and heavy people sank into it and were engulfed in the mire. The great fossil bones of mastodons, elephants, and *Brontotheridæ* are said by the Pawnees to be the bones of these giants ; and that such remains are often found sticking out of cut banks, or in deep cañons, buried under many feet of earth, is deemed conclusive evidence that the giants did sink into the soft earth and so perish.

After the giant race had passed away, *Tiráwa* created a new people, a man and a woman, who were like those now on the earth. These people were at first poor, naked, and were without any knowledge of how they should live ; but after a time the Creator gave them the corn, the buffalo, and the wild roots and fruits of the prairie for food, bows and arrows to kill their game, and fire-sticks to furnish a means of cooking it. Where they originated the Ruler provided for them these various things, such as trees bearing fruits, and things that grow in the ground, artichokes, wild turnips, and other roots. In the rivers he put fish, and on the land game. All these things, everything good to eat found on the plains or in the timber, was given to them by *Tiráwa*.

All these gifts were presented to the Pawnees in the country in which they were originally created, and which, as clearly appears from the statements of the oldest men, was far to the southwest. It was in this original country that the Pawnees received their sacred bundles. When they were given them the people knew nothing of iron, but used flint knives and arrow-heads. The bundles are said to have been handed down from the Father, though in certain cases special stories are told of how particular bundles came to be received.

A more detailed account of the creation and the doings of the original people is given by the Arikaras, but it is not in all respects like that told by the Pawnees, for these two tribes separated long ago. This story, which is generally known in the Arikara tribe, has come to me from various sources. Two Crows,—the Chief Priest and the fountain of sacred learning for the tribe,—Pahukatawá, Fight-

ing Bear, and others have given me portions of this history; but the most complete account I owe to the kindness of the Rev. C. L. Hall, who had it from a Ree known as Peter Burdash, and he received it direct from Ka-ka-pit'ka (Two Crows), the priest. The account is as follows: In the beginning *Atiuch* (= Pawnee *Atius*) created the earth and a people of stone. These people were so strong that they had no need of the Creator, and would not obey him. They even defied him; so he determined to put an end to them. He therefore caused a great rain, which fell continuously for many days, until the land was all covered with water, and the trees were dead and the tops of the hills were submerged. Many of these people being big and heavy, and so able to move only slowly, could not reach the tops of the hills, to which all tried to escape for safety, and even those who did so were drowned by the rising waters, which at last covered the whole land. Everything on the earth was dead. [To-day in the washed clay bluffs of the bad lands, the horizontal lines of stratification are shown as marking the level of the waters at various times during this flood, and the hard sandstone pinnacles which cap the bluffs, and which sometimes present a rude semblance of the human form, are pointed out as the remains of these giants.]

Now when everything was dead, there was left a mosquito flying about over the water and a little duck swimming on it. These two met, and the duck said to the mosquito, "How is it that you are here?" The mosquito said: "I can live on this foam; how is it with you?" The duck answered: "When I am hungry I can dive down and eat the green weed that grows under the water." Then said the mosquito: "I am tired of this foam. If you will take me with you to taste of the things of the earth, I shall know that you are true." So the duck took the mosquito under his wing, where he would keep dry, and dived down with him to the bottom of the water, and as soon as they touched the ground all the water disappeared. There was now nothing living on the earth.

Then *Atiuch* determined that he would again make men, and he did so. But again he made them too nearly like himself. They were too powerful, and he was afraid of them, and again destroyed them all.

Then he made one man like the men of to-day. When this man had been created he said to himself: "How is it now? There is still something that does not quite please me." Then *Atiuch* made a woman, and set her by the man, and the man said: "You knew why I was not pleased. You knew what I wanted. Now I can walk the earth in gladness." *Atiuch* seems to have made men and the animals up above in the sky where he lives, and when he was satisfied with what he had made, he resolved to place them upon the earth. So he called the lightning to put them on the earth, and the light-

ning caused a cloud to come, and the cloud received what *Atiuch* had made. But the lightning, acting as he always does, set them down on the earth with a crash, and as the ground was still wet with the water that had covered it, they all sank into the soft earth. This made the lightning feel very badly and he cried, and to this day whenever he strikes the earth he cries. That is what we hear when it thunders.

Now all living things were under the ground in confusion and asking one another what each was; but one day, as the mole was digging around, he broke a hole through, so that the light streamed in, and he drew back frightened. He has never had any eyes since; the light put them out. The mole did not want to come out, but all the others came out on to the earth through the hole the mole had made.

[In some versions this is understood to have taken place in the country now occupied by the Rees, but older men say it happened "in the far south country, by the big water."]

After they had come out from the ground, the people looked about to see where they should go. They had nothing. They did not know what to do, nor how to support themselves. They began to travel, moving very slowly; but after their third day's camp, a boy, who had been left behind asleep at the first camp that they had made, overtook the company, carrying in his arms a large bundle. The people asked him what this was. He replied that when he woke up and found the people gone, he cried to Father for help, and Father gave him this bundle, which had taught him to find the way to his people. Then the people were glad, and said that now they would find the way, and they went on.

After they had gone a long way, they came to a deep ravine with high steep banks, and they could not cross it. There they had to stop. All came to this place, but they could not get over it. They asked the boy what they should do, and he opened the bundle, and out of it came a bird with a sharp bill,—the most sacred of all birds, the bone striker. Wherever this bird strikes its bill it makes a hole. This bird flew over the ravine and began to strike the bank with his bill, and flew against the bank again and again, and at last the dirt fell down and filled up the ravine, and made a road for the people to pass across. A part of them passed over, but before all had done so the road closed up, and the ravine became as it had been at first. Those who were behind perished. They were changed into badgers, snakes, and animals living in the ground. They went on farther, and at length came to a thick wood, so thick that they could not pass through it. Here they had to stop, for they did not know how they could pass through this timber. Again they asked the boy

what should be done, and he opened the bundle, and an owl came out from it, and went into the wood and made a path through it. A number of the people got through the wood, but some old women and poor children were lagging behind, and the road closed up and caught them, and these were changed to bears, wildcats, elks, and so on.

[Another version says that a mole came out of the bundle and tunnelled a passage beneath the forest, and when this passage closed up those who were caught in it changed into moles, muskrats, beavers, and other animals that live under ground.]

The people went on farther, and came to a big river which poured down and stopped them, and they waited on the bank. When they went to the bundle, a big hawk came out of it. This bird flew across the river and caused the water to stop flowing. They started across the dry river bed, and when part had gone across and were on this side, and some old women and poor children were still in the stream bed, the water began to flow again and drowned them. These people were turned into fishes, and this is why fishes are related to men. [The order in which these obstacles to their progress were encountered differs in different versions of the story.]

They went on until they came to some high hills called the Blue Mountains, and from these mountains they saw a beautiful country that they thought would be good to live in ; but when they consulted the boy who carried the bundle he said : "No, we shall see life and live in it." So they went on.

Soon after this some people began to gamble, and one party won everything that the others had, and at last they began to quarrel and then to fight, and the people separated and went different ways, and the animals, which had all this time been with them, got frightened and ran away. But some of the people still remained, and they asked the boy what they should do, and he went to the bundle and took from it a pipe, and when he held up the pipe the fighting ceased. With the pipe was a stone arrow-head, and the boy told them they must make others like this, for from now on they would have to fight ; but before this there had been no war. In the bundle also they found an ear of corn. The boy said : "We are to live by this. This is our Mother." The corn taught them how to make bows and arrows.

Now the people no longer spoke one language, and the eight tribes who had run away no longer understood each other and lived together, but wandered about, and the Mother (*Atiná* = Pawnee *Atira*) no longer remained with them, but left them alone. The ninth or remaining band — which included the Rees, Mandans, and Pawnees — now left the Blue Mountains and travelled on until they reached a great river,

and then they knew what the boy meant by saying "We shall see life and live in it." Life meant the Missouri River, and they said: "This is the place where our Mother means us to live." The first night they stayed by the river, but they went off in the morning and left behind them two dogs asleep. One was black, the other white; one was male, the other female. At the third camp they said: "This is a good place; we will live here." They asked the boy what they should do, and he told them that they should separate into three bands; that he would divide the corn among them, and they could plant it. He broke off the nub and gave it to the Mandans, the big end and gave it to the Pawnees, and the middle of the ear he gave to the Rees. To this day the Mandans have the shortest corn, the Rees next in size, and the Pawnees the best and largest. He also took from the bundle beans, which he divided among the people, and the sack of a buffalo's heart full of tobacco. Here by the river they first planted and ate, and were well off, while the eight bands that had run away were dying of hunger. When they got here they had no fire. They knew nothing of it. They tried to get it from the sun, and sent the swallow to bring it. He flew toward the sun, but could not get the fire, and came back, saying that the sun had burned him. This is why the swallow's back is black to-day. The crow was sent. He used to be white, but the sun burned him too. Another kind of bird was sent, and he got the fire.

After this they travelled again, and as they travelled they were followed by two great fires that came up on the hills behind them and shut them in, so that they did not know how to escape. The bundle told them to go to a cedar-tree on a precipice, and that if they held fast to this they would not be hurt by these two great bad things. They did so and escaped, but all cedars have been crooked ever since. These two great fires were the two dogs that had been left behind at their first camp. These dogs then came to them and said: "Our hearts are not all bad. We have bitten you because you left us without waking us up, but now we have had our revenge and we want to live with you." But sickness and death have followed the people ever since they first left these dogs behind.

The dogs were taken back into the company and grew old. The female dog grew old and poor, and died first, and was thrown into the river, and after that the male dog died; but before he died they said to him: "Now you are going to die and be with your wife." "Yes," he replied. "But you will not hate us. From this time you will eat us, and so you will think well of us. And from the female dog's skin has come the squash, and you will like this, and on this account, also, you will not hate us." So ever since that day dogs have been raised as friends, and afterwards eaten for revenge, because of their treachery.

After this, they looked out on the prairie and saw some great black animals having horns, and they looked as though they were going to attack them. The people dug a hole, and got in and covered it over, and when the buffalo rushed on them they were safe, though their dwelling trembled and the people thought the roof would fall in. Finally some one looked out and saw the buffalo standing around. They did not look very fierce, so forty men, women, and children ventured out; but the buffalo attacked them, tore off their arms and ate them, and tore off their hair. Ever since that time there has been a lock of Ree's hair in the buffalo's mouth, hanging down from his chin. One handsome young woman was carried off by the buffalo. They held a council to know what they should do with her. She said she could not travel, and they did not wish to kill her. They did not wish to let her go either. But one night when she was sleeping in the midst of the band, a young bull came to her and pulled her sleeve, and told her to follow him, that he would show her the way back to her people. He did so, and his parting words to her were: "Tell your people that we do not like the bows and arrows that they make, and so we have attacked you."

The young woman was gladly received. They asked the boy with the bundle what should be done with the buffalo. He answered: "The buffalo are to be our food. They ate us first, so now we will always follow them for food. We must make arrows like the one *Tinawá¹* gave us with the pipe, and fight the buffalo with them." After making many arrows of the flint they use for striking fires, they all came out of the hole in the earth and lived by planting and hunting.²

The Rees have always kept near the Missouri River, and have lived by planting. The bundle reputed to have been given to the boy in the beginning is now in the house of Two Crows. It is still powerful. It contains the ear of corn which was first given to the Rees. When a great young man dies — a chief's son — and the people mourn, the relations are asked to the Ree medicine-lodge, and the ear of corn is taken from the bundle and put for a short time in a bucket of water and then replaced in the bundle. As many as

¹ *Tinawá* = Pawnee *Tirdwa*.

² The Algonquin Blackfeet also tell of a time soon after the creation when the buffalo used to eat them. This was before they had bows and arrows; in fact, in some accounts it is even said that then the people had paws like the bears, and supported themselves by digging roots and gathering berries. When *Nápi*, the Blackfoot Creator, learned that the buffalo were killing and eating the people, he felt very badly, and he split their paws so as to make fingers on them, and made bows and arrows and taught the people how to use them. There is also a Blackfoot story of a young woman who was captured and taken away by the buffalo, and who afterward returned to the tribe. See *Blackfoot Lodge Tales*, pp. 104 and 140.

drink of that water are cured of sad hearts, and never mourn their friends again.

HEROIC MYTHS.

The Pawnee mythology includes stories of many heroes who in ancient times were helped by the Ruler, and through his aid were enabled to accomplish wonderful things. As a rule, the names of these mythical heroes have been lost. The tales usually have to do with a poor boy, who was pitied by *Attus* on account of his miserable condition, and who, after various adventures, in which the *Nahúrac* act a prominent part, giving him their power, becomes a great warrior and doctor, and finally the head chief of the tribe. The pity felt by *Tiráwa* for the person helped does not appear ever to be based on any merit which the individual possesses, but merely upon his wretchedness.

Although the names of these heroes have usually been forgotten, we occasionally find a case in which a name is connected with the story, as happens in the tale of the "Man who called the Buffalo;" but this, as I have endeavored to show elsewhere, is a myth of comparatively recent origin, and is based upon a custom common among the Pawnees up to the time when they obtained horses.

Perhaps the most famous of the mythical heroes of the Pawnees was Pahukátaba, about whom many tales are related by the Arikaras, the Skidi, and the true Pawnees. In one account of this hero he was raised from the dead by the power of the animals, and regained his human shape and the substance of a man; yet he does not appear to have been actually a man, but rather a spirit, for he had the power of making himself invisible, and of traversing great distances in a moment of time. The tale, as told by the Skidi,¹ bears in certain respects a resemblance to the story of Christ. It may be noticed that the hero of the Pawnee story gained his immortality in this story by the exhibition of a selfish cowardice, certainly not by any merit. Pahukátaba was for many years a protecting spirit of the Pawnees, but after they denied him he went away to the Arikaras. Among them he was long known, and is reputed to have had one or more children by a Ree woman. I have talked with an old man, said to be a grandson of Pahukatawá, who told me he had on one occasion seen that hero. He was described as a man, having feet like a wolf, and wearing a robe made of wolf skins. The old man who told this — whose name was also Pahukatawá — went toward the form, intending to speak to it, but when he came close to it, it suddenly disappeared.

The following is a story of Pahukatawá as told by the Rees. The Pawnees started on the warpath, coming up toward the north.

¹ *Pawnee Hero Stories and Folk-Tales*, p. 142.

Pahukatawá was the leader. They got as far as the middle of the Black Hills, when a large party of the enemy came in sight, and rushed forward to attack them. Pahukatawá said to the people whom he was leading: "You go up on that hill there and I will stay here and fight them off." The others ran up on the high hill, but Pahukatawá remained below and fought the Cheyennes. After a long time they killed and scalped him, and cut off his arms and legs, and left him there and went away. While his people were still looking down from the hill, a cloud of fine white mist came down from the sky. It came lower and lower, until it reached the ground over the body, but it was only in that one place. After a time, the Pawnees came down from the hill and went to look for the body, but they could not find it, nor any part of it. The parts had come together, and had become alive, and Pahukatawá had gone away. They found the tracks where he had walked away, and they found a wet place where he had drunk, and the prints of his knees in the mud. Therefore they gave him that name Pa-hu-ka-tawá, Knee Print by the Water. Some claim that it was the night and the stars, the moon and thunder that made him strong to get up. His body is supposed to have gone up above.

It is to be observed that the miracles which so frequently occur in the heroic myths of the Pawnees, and which generally result in the bringing to life of the person who is pitied by the *Nahúrac*, often take place during a storm of rain accompanied by wind and thunder. Examples of this are found in the stories of the "Dun Horse," *Pahukdtawa*, *Ore ke ráhr*, and others.¹ The rain, the wind, and the thunder may be regarded as special manifestations of the power of the Deity, or these may perhaps be considered as veils which he uses to conceal the manifestations of this power from the eyes of men.

What has already been said shows that the mythology of the Pawnees inculcates strongly the religious idea and impresses upon the listener the importance of trusting in the Ruler, and asking his help.

Perhaps the most singular thing about this Pawnee religion, as it has been taught to me, is its close resemblance in many particulars to certain forms of the religion of Christ as it exists to-day. While their practices were those of the savage people, their theories of duty and their attitude toward the Supreme Being were on a much more lofty plane. The importance of faith in the Deity is most strongly insisted on; sacrifices must be made to him,—offerings of the good things of this earth, often of parts of their own bodies; penance must be done. But, above all things else, those who desire success in life must humble themselves before the Deity and must

¹ *Pawnee Hero Stories.*

implore his help. The lessons taught by many of the myths are precisely those which would be taught by the Christian priest to-day, while the burnt-offerings to *Atius* may be compared with like sacrifices spoken of in the Old Testament, and the personal tortures undergone during certain of their ceremonies are almost the exact equivalents of the sufferings inflicted on themselves by certain religionists of the Middle Ages.

On the whole, the Pawnee religion, so far as I understand it, is a singularly pure faith, and in its essential features will compare favorably with any savage system. If written in our own sacred books, the trust and submission to the will of the Ruler shown in some of the myths, which I have elsewhere recorded, would be called sublime. What, for example, could be finer than the prayer offered by a man who, through the hostility of a rival, is in the deepest distress and utterly hopeless of human aid, and who throws himself on the mercy of the Creator, and at the same time implores the intercession of the *Nahúrac*. This man prepares to offer his horse as a sacrifice to the animals, but before killing it he says: "My Father [who dwells] in all places, it is through you that I am living. Perhaps it was through you that this man put me in this condition. You are the Ruler. Nothing is impossible to you. If you see fit, take this [trouble] away from me. Now you, all fish of the rivers, and you, all birds of the air, and all animals that move upon the earth, and you, O Sun! I present to you this animal. You birds in the air, and you animals upon the earth, we are related; we are alike in this respect, that one Ruler made us all. You see me, how unhappy I am. If you have any power, intercede for me."

George Bird Grinnell.